

2017-18 Evaluation of the Academic Facilitators Program

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At-a-Glance

The main purpose of the Academic Facilitators program was to develop and maintain a system that supported the academic facilitators (AFs) in increasing student achievement by improving teacher effectiveness across core content areas. The model supported teacher growth in the areas of content knowledge, leadership capacity, and instructional pedagogy. The model components included coaching, data-driven instruction, systems of support, professional development, and Professional Learning Communities. The Academic Facilitators program received \$5,978,757 in Title I funding for the 2017-18 school year. The funds provided for personnel (\$5,662,751.20), supplies and materials (\$116,217.80), and employee travel (\$199,788.00) expenses.

Academic facilitators (N=38) reported to and worked closely with their executive director (ED) [N=21]. The AFs provided instructional and ongoing professional development support, in their specialized content area, to campus instructional coaches (CICs) and campus administrators on their assigned campuses. Support was aligned with instructional priorities arising from the goals of the Dallas ISD Board of Trustees and the Teacher Excellence Initiative (TEI). Academic facilitators collaborated with Teaching and Learning to determine professional development needs for CICs (met once every 6 weeks).

Similarly, the CICs (N=366) supported teachers to help strengthen their knowledge of the subject matter and delivery of instruction, all with the purpose of improving student academic achievement. All campuses had at least one CIC (most had two; one reading and one mathematics). CICs reported to the campus principal and utilized a variety of methods to improve teaching, such as coaching, monitoring data, focused dialogue, collaborative planning, action plan implementation and providing professional development.

Purpose and Methods of the Evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation was to evaluate the extent to which the Academic Facilitators program was implemented with fidelity and met expected outcomes as outlined in program documents. Data were collected through program staff interviews and surveys.

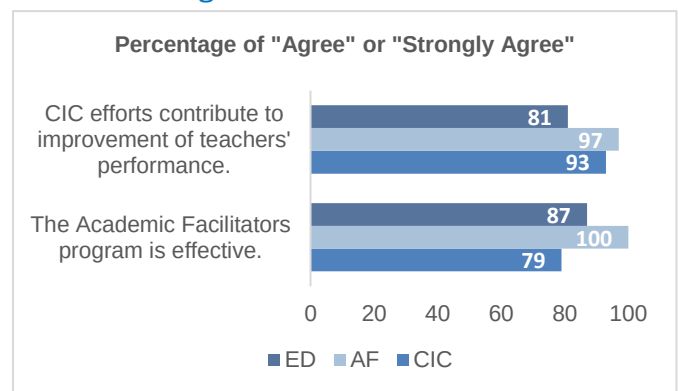
Academic Facilitators Program Survey

In close collaboration with the program manager, surveys were developed for the executive directors, the academic facilitators and campus instructional coaches. The purpose of the surveys was to collect information about services provided by the academic facilitators during the 2017-18 school year. They also provided an opportunity to provide feedback for improving the program in the future. Administration of the surveys occurred in February 2018. Frequency analysis was used to report the data.

Survey Results

A total of 17 EDs, 34 AFs, and 324 CICs responded to the surveys. The data in Figure 1 showed that academic facilitators had the highest level of agreement ("Agree"/"Strongly Agree") than CICs and EDs that "CIC efforts contributed to the improvement of teachers' performance" and that "the Academic Facilitator's program was effective."

Figure 1: Perceptions of EDs, AFs, and CICs Regarding the Implementation of the Academic Facilitators Program

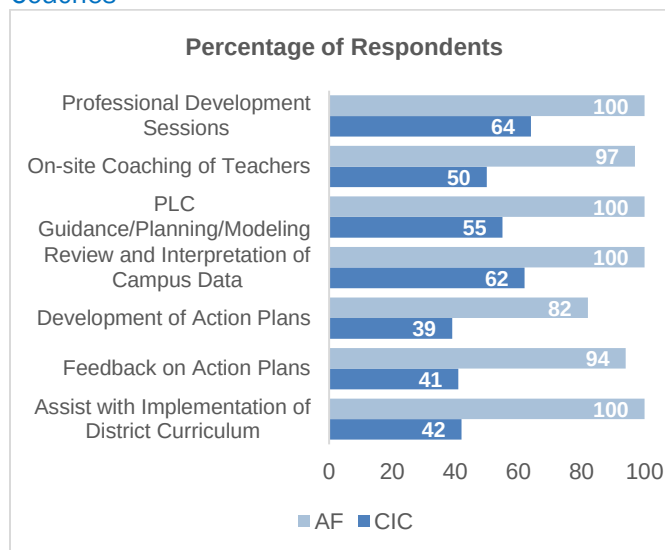


Source: Data were collected from 2017-18 Academic Facilitators Program Survey.

Note: EDs = Executive Directors, AFs = Academic Facilitators, and CICs = Campus Instructional Coaches.

The data indicated that most academic facilitators (82% to 100%) provided the services listed in Figure 2, while CICs specified that they provided the same services to a much lesser degree (39% to 64%).

Figure 2: Identified AF Program Services Provided by Academic Facilitators and Campus Instructional Coaches



Source: Data were collected from 2017-18 Academic Facilitators Program Survey.

Note: AF= Academic Facilitator and CIC = Campus Instructional Coach, and PLC = Professional Learning Communities.

Executive Directors

EDs (N=17) reported a variety of duties/responsibilities they assigned to academic facilitators. Five of the most common duties/responsibilities assigned for the 2017-18 school year included:

- providing professional development to CICs/campuses across feeder pattern (N=10);
- providing data analysis, review, desegregation, etc. (N=11);
- providing ongoing coaching support to CICs (N=9);
- providing instructional/academic support to CICs (N=5); and
- working with the PLCs (i.e., modeling, planning with teachers and CICs, etc.) [N=5].

Most EDs (76.5%) expressed, “they believed the model of having academic facilitators provide professional development to campus instructional coaches” was “Moderately” to “Extremely Helpful.” They indicated that the professional development academic facilitators received with Teaching and Learning (T&L) was beneficial to their feeder pattern (64.7%). The data also showed that the majority of EDs (87.5%), “believed that the Academic Facilitators program had strengthened the skills and practices of the campus instructional coaches.”

More EDs expressed that professional development, academic facilitator roles, and collaboration were three supports that would benefit them and better strengthen the academic facilitator function (Table 1).

Table 1: Three Supports that Would be Beneficial to EDs that Might Better Strengthen the Academic Facilitator function

1. Professional Development (N=8)	
•	more training in curriculum and instruction,
•	design targeted campus professional development,
•	T&L training with specific aligned district writing plan,
•	whole group training with EDs working with AFs, and
•	attend specific professional development together
2. Academic Facilitator Roles (N=8)	
•	define AF roles in relationship with T&L,
•	protocols for aligning the work of the ED and AF in their roles of supporting campuses,
•	share best practices on the role of the AF across feeders, and
•	find different ways AFs can support campuses
3. Collaboration (N=6)	
•	ED PD & Collaboration session around AF Functions,
•	collaboration with other EDs about AFs' work,
•	collaboration around AF PD sessions, and
•	collaboration on the purchase of instructional resources

Source: Data were collected from 2017-18 Academic Facilitators Program Survey.

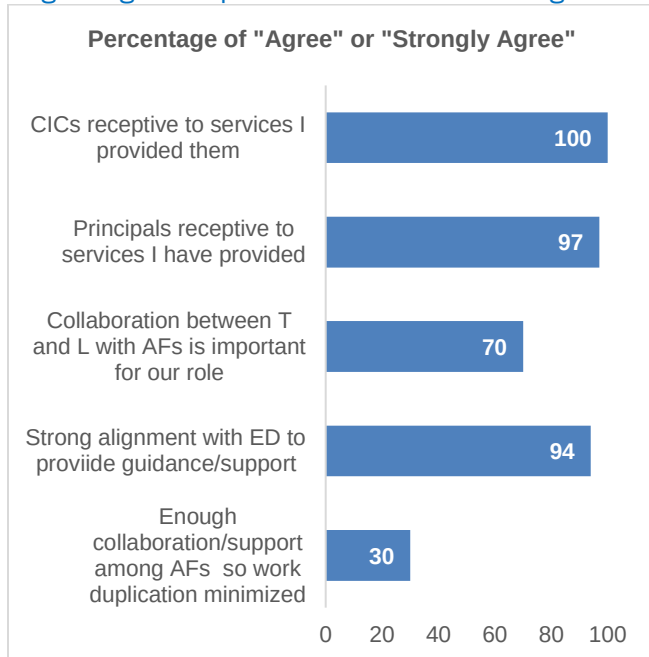
Note: EDs = Executive Directors, AFs = Academic Facilitators, CICs = Campus Instructional Coaches, PD = Professional Development, and T&L = Teaching and Learning.

Academic Facilitators

All academic facilitators (N=34) served all grade levels. Half (50%) specialized in mathematics, 41 percent in English/Language Arts, and nine percent in other content areas. The AFs indicated high levels of agreement (“Agree”/“Strongly Agree”) with most statements listed in Figure 3, except for “enough collaboration/support among the AFs so duplication of work is minimized.”

Seventy-six percent of academic facilitators rated the value of the professional development training they received from the T & L Department as “Moderately” to “Extremely” valuable, combined.

Figure 3: Academic Facilitators' Perceptions Regarding the Implementation of the AF Program



Source: Data were collected from 2017-18 Academic Facilitators Program Survey.

Note: AF = Academic Facilitator, CICs = Campus Instructional Coaches, ED = Executive Director, and T & L = Teaching and Learning.

Academic facilitators (N=33) reported numerous challenges that they encountered during the 2017-18 school year. The top four challenges included:

- **Time (N=9):** to fulfill the EDs' expectations; for AFs to collaborate; for planning; to spend with other AFs; to develop professional development;
- **Collaboration (N=4):** lack of opportunities to meet with other AFs; and a place to collaborate;
- **New teachers (N=3):** assisting CICs with new teachers; dealing with the teachers lack of content and pedagogical knowledge; and getting them better faster; and
- **Leadership (N=3)** unequal job expectations depending on the ED; unequal resources; and gaps in communication; principals make ultimate decisions (may or may not agree with recommendations).

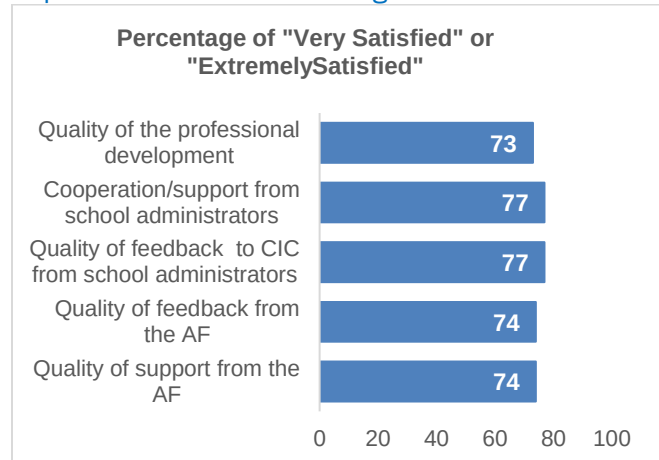
Campus Instructional Coaches

Data showed that 67 percent of CICs (N=324) specified that they provided services at the elementary school level and 93 percent indicated that an academic facilitator had provided services to them and their campus. Half (56.8%) of the respondents also reported

that the AF provided services to their campus "regularly (scheduled)."

A majority of CICs expressed high satisfaction levels ("Very Satisfied"/"Extremely Satisfied") concerning their "perceptions regarding the implementation of the AF program". The responses were almost similar in all areas, as presented in Figure 4.

Figure 4: CICs' Perceptions Regarding the Implementation of the AF Program

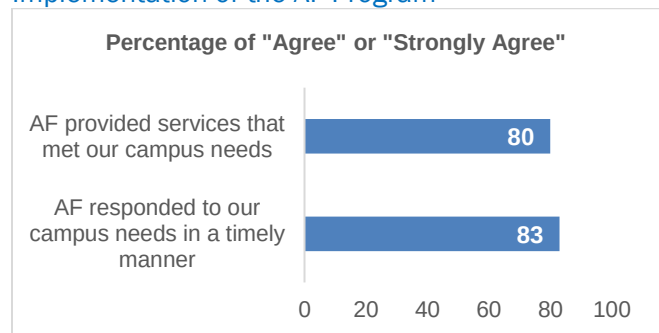


Source: Data were collected from 2017-18 Academic Facilitators Program Survey.

Note: AF = Academic Facilitator and CICs = Campus Instructional Coaches.

High levels of agreement ("Agree"/"Strongly Agree") were reported by CICs, "that the AF provided services that met their campus needs" and "responded to campus needs in a timely manner."

Figure 5: CICs' Perceptions Regarding the Implementation of the AF Program



Source: Data were extracted from the 2017-18 Academic Facilitators Program Survey.

Note: AF = Academic Facilitator, CICs = Campus Instructional Coaches.

Of the total number of survey respondents, 262 expressed specific ways in which they benefitted from the Academic Facilitators program during the 2017-18 school year. The top five benefits reported included:

- **AF support (N=63):** responding to all needs requested; always willing to help; gave prompt

responses; supported the teachers; kept them abreast on new and changes in information; provided specific support per content; support with planning; and provided administrative support.

- **Coaching (N=54):** built coaching capacity; improved coaching skills; AF provided insight and coaching strategies; and guidance on the coaching cycle.
- **Feedback (N=39):** on improving coaching skills.; on campus challenges; modeling feedback conversations; practicing effective feedback; improving classroom instruction; coaching methodology; on teacher support; and on action plans.
- **Resources (N=34):** help with finding resources; provided resources to meet CIC's needs; AFs most phenomenal resource this year; provided valuable information for implementation in the classroom and campus; many resources through Literacy Leads; learned about resources through district for mathematics; and provided in a timely manner, and
- **Data (N=32):** explored; reviewed; analyzed; tracked; data-driven decision-making; created action plan with achievement data; and used data to guide and support teachers.

A total of 152 campus instructional coaches made numerous suggestions for improving the Academic Facilitators program. Some of the more common suggestions included the following:

- **Academic Facilitator Availability (N=11):** hire more AFs and include for Science and Social Studies content areas; allow them to become specialized (elementary/secondary); and one for each level (elementary, middle and high school) per content for each feeder pattern;
- **Continue/provide more professional development/training (N=19):** monthly; effective and relevant; on coaching role; how to help teachers; improving coaching feedback; offer PD at the beginning of the school year (overload second semester with campus schedules); more content PD only for CICs in that content area; and offer half-day for training and the other half for planning implementation;
- **Provide more support (N=20):** to new CICs; to develop coaches' capacity; to model content/lessons to unify teaching strategies; with specific initiatives in the areas of

assessment and curriculum development; with campus feedback; and with resources; and

- **More time (N=15):** in the classroom, at campus planning; implementing professional development; and to support secondary schools.

Additional comments expressed by 130 CICs primarily included accolades and positive experiences about the Academic Facilitators program and its staff.

Summary

During the 2017-18 school year, 38 academic facilitators provided instructional and ongoing professional development support, in their specialized content area, to 366 campus instructional coaches and campus administrators. The model supported teacher growth in the areas of content knowledge, leadership capacity, and instructional pedagogy. As a note, the Academic Facilitators program is undergoing a transition for the 2018-19 school year.

Recommendations

- **Consider ways to build collaboration and support among academic facilitators to minimize duplication of work.** Survey results showed that less than one third of AFs believed there was enough collaboration and support, resulting in the duplication of work.
- **Continue to build on the strengths of the AF program and to improve the program based on 2017-18 Academic Facilitator Survey results.** Survey results showed that the majority of EDs, AFs, and CICs believed that the Academic Facilitator's program was effective. Numerous respondents gave suggestions to strengthen the program through professional development, better clarification of the AF role, and increased collaboration between EDs, AFs, and CICs to improve campus support (AFs with EDs; AFs with AFs; and AFs with CICs).

An electronic version of this report can be found at www.dallasisd.org/Page/888. For more information, please contact Program Evaluation at evaluation@dallasisd.org.

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